

AMENDMENT 2007-M-02 – RAINIER AVENUE

DESCRIPTION: This map amendment request involves four parcels, two on Rainier Avenue North and two on Hardie Avenue, that are currently designated by the Comprehensive Plan as Residential Medium Density and Commercial Corridor. The parcels are back-to-back spanning the width of the block and forming a backwards “L” with frontage on Rainier. All parcels are located in the 100-block of their respective streets.

The owner of the property would like to develop a mixed-use multi-family condominium project that would front Rainier Avenue. This proposal would require a Comprehensive Plan amendment to Commercial Corridor and a rezone to Commercial Arterial on Hardie. The proposal would also require an expansion of the Rainier Business District overlay to achieve the desired density and a zoning code text change to include the Rainier Business District with the other business districts that allow 60 dwelling units per acre. Currently, the maximum density allowed in Commercial Arterial is 20 dwelling units per acre, the other business overlays allows 60 dwelling units per acre. Extension of the overlay would require an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan. The owner of the property submitted a land use action request to amend the Comprehensive Plan designation and the extent of the overlay, to rezone the property, and to amend the text to allow 60 dwelling units per acre in the Rainier Business District overlay.

The City staff is considering whether to expand this review to include an amendment and rezone for all or many parcels fronting Rainier Avenue. City staff is also considering expanding the Rainier Business District Overlay north to the City limits and/or south to Grady Way.

ISSUE SUMMARY:

1. What is the City’s vision for Rainier Avenue?
2. What is the City’s vision for multi-family and/or mixed-use in the Rainier Corridor?
3. What is the appropriate density for multi-family projects in the Rainier Corridor?
4. Should the Comprehensive Plan designation on Hardie Avenue be changed to Commercial Corridor?
5. Should the Rainier Avenue Business District Overlay be extended to the subject properties?
6. Should the Rainier Avenue Business District Overlay be extended further north and/or further south?

ANALYSIS: The subject properties total approximately 69,681 square feet, approximately 1.6 acres and have existing uses. Those uses include a 1,872 square foot retail store built in 1968, a 624 square foot storage garage built in 1957, a 316 square foot

espresso stand built in 2004, a 1,733 square foot single family home built in 1908, and a 1,470 square foot single family home built in 1950.

The following are existing uses in the 300 block of Park Avenue North:

- 1) In the R-10 zone:
 - a. Triplex, multi-family residential, built in 1942 and a duplex, multi-family residential built in 1944
 - b. Duplex, multi-family residential, built in 1941
 - c. Single-family residence, built in 1913
 - d. Single-family residence, built in 1940
 - e. Subject property, single-family residence, built in 1908
- 1) In the CA zone:
 - a. A-1 Clutch-Brake-Transmission, built in 1955
 - b. A paved parking area
 - c. Auto rebuild business, built in 1958
 - d. Retail store and an automotive garages, built in 1965
 - e. City of Seattle Right of Way, no buildings
 - f. Pizza Hut Restaurant, built in 1978
 - g. Single story office building, built in 1980
 - h. Midas automotive, built in 1978
 - i. Walgreen's, built in 1999
 - j. Office building, built in 1941
 - k. Office building, built in 1982

Subject Properties

Mr. O'Farrell's properties total approximately 69,681 square feet, approximately 1.6 acres. Those uses include a 1,872 square foot retail store built in 1968, a 624 square foot storage garage built in 1957, a 316 square foot espresso stand built in 2004, a 1,733 square foot single family home built in 1908, and a 1,470 square foot single family home built in 1950.

Mr. O'Farrell, the proponent of this land use action request, has proposed developing a mixed-use multi-story building that would utilize all four parcels. Surface parking to serve the commercial use on Rainier would be located at the front of the building on Rainier. A parking garage that would accommodate the 99 residential units would be located under the building with access from the rear of the property on Hardie Avenue and Victoria Street. If the property were rezoned CA with the Rainier Business District Overlay, a fifteen-foot (15') setback would be required.

To the south and east of Mr. O'Farrell's properties the current land use is intensive. The A-1 Clutch-Brake-Transmission that is located there accommodates many users throughout their business hours. To the east, Rainier Avenue South is an arterial street that accommodates approximately 44,600 vehicle trips per day. Rainier Avenue South is a very high traffic volume arterial that serves as a gateway to the City of Renton for

people who travel south on Rainier from Seattle. To the north across Victoria Street are two parcels, one with a single-family residence and the Victoria Apartments, a three story building. To the west, is Renton Villa retirement center a three-story building that occupies the entire western portion of the 100-block of Hardie Avenue.

The one parcel located at 188 Hardie Avenue is one of five parcels in the block that are designated Residential Medium Density and zoned Residential 10. To the north the four other parcels are designated as Residential Medium Density and zoned R-10. To the south and east all parcels in this block are designated Commercial Corridor and zoned Commercial Arterial (CA).

Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Alternatives

These parcels are currently designated Commercial Corridor and Residential Medium Density and are zoned Commercial Arterial (CA) and Residential 10 (R-10). Both parcels on Rainier are zoned Commercial Arterial and one parcel on Hardie is zoned CA with the other parcel zoned R-10.

The **Residential Medium Density** Comprehensive Plan designation is intended to create the opportunity for neighborhoods that offer a variety of lot sizes, housing, and ownership options. Residential Medium Density neighborhoods should include a variety of unit types designed to incorporate features from both single-family developments, support cost-efficient housing, facilitate infill development, encourage use of transit service, and promote the efficient use of urban services and infrastructure. The designation is implemented by both the R-10 and R-14 zoning designations. The zoning for the subject property is R-10. The uses allowed in the Residential 10 zone are primarily various forms of residential. There are no commercial uses that would be viable in an urban neighborhood permitted in the R-10 zone.

In the R-10 zone, multi-family developments on parcels greater than ½ acre are required to have at minimum 50 percent detached or semi-attached dwelling units. The zoning tables, 4-2-110F state, “a minimum of one detached or semi-detached unit must be provided for each attached dwelling unit (e.g. townhouse or flat) created within a proposed development. A maximum of 4 units may be consecutively attached”. A maximum of 4 residential units are allowable on any legal lot within the R-10 zone. Additionally, the maximum number of building stories allowed is two with a maximum building height of 30 feet. These requirements for residential development in the R-10 zone essentially disallow multi-story residential projects.

The intent of the **Commercial Corridor** Comprehensive Plan designation is to facilitate areas evolving from strip commercial linear business districts to business areas characterized by enhanced site planning incorporating efficient parking lot design, coordinated access, amenities, and boulevard treatment. Commercial Corridor areas may include designated districts including concentrations of specialized uses such as the Auto

Mall, or features such as transit stops and a combination of businesses creating a focal point of pedestrian activity and visual interest.

The Commercial Corridor designation is implemented with Commercial Arterial zoning. The Commercial Arterial zone is characterized by concentrated pre-existing commercial activity, primarily in linear form, that provides necessary goods and services for daily living, accessible to near-by neighborhoods, serving a sub-regional market and accommodating large volumes of traffic. Buildings in the CA zone are allowed to build to a height of fifty-feet (50') in height. It is the intention of City objectives and policies that Commercial Corridor areas evolve from "strip commercial" linear business districts to business areas characterized by enhanced site planning incorporating efficient parking lot design, coordinated access, amenities, and boulevard treatment. The areas may also include features such as transit stops and a combination of businesses creating a focal point of pedestrian activity and visual interest. Medium intensity to high levels of activity also characterize these areas. It is anticipated that over time these areas will increase over time as development of vacant space occurs, increased land values make redevelopment feasible, and land is more efficiently used. In these districts, provision of pedestrian amenities is encouraged, as are opportunities to link adjacent uses and neighborhoods. Commercial Arterial zones typically have high volumes of pass-through traffic. Commercial Arterial zoning allows uses that are large in scale and have large volumes of business and or provide significant employment. Typically, CA businesses are expected to generate vehicular traffic and require on-site parking.

The residential development that is allowed in the CA zone is exclusively semi-attached or attached dwelling units. In the CA zone, multi-family residential has a maximum density of 20 dwelling units per acre, except within Sunset, NE Fourth, and Puget Business Districts where 60 dwelling units is allowed. These overlays require the project to be mixed-use in the same building in order to achieve the 60 dwelling unit per acre density allowance. Within the Rainier Business District Overlay the underlying implementing zone is CA, however there are additional requirements within the overlay. Those development standards include: consolidated entry points, monument signage, 15 foot setbacks, and parking is limited to the minimum requirements of the CA zone. Additionally, the proponent seeks to ensure that the standard set forth in Renton Municipal Code 4-2-120-A that allows a density of 60 dwelling units per acre in business overlays applies to the Renton Business District Overlay. The proponent seeks to amend the text to allow 60 dwelling units per acre in the Rainier Business District overlay.

CAPACITY ANALYSIS: Development of these parcels with the current zoning could possibly yield a fifty-foot high building. Based on buildable lands methodology, in the R-10 zone a single-family or multi-family residence would develop with a density of 10.3 du/acre. Thus, the parcel that is currently designated R-10 could develop with 2.99 dwelling units with no change in designation. The same methodology indicates that Commercial Arterial properties develop with a floor area ratio of .17. The three parcels currently with CA zoning total 57,221 square feet, 1.3 acres, would yield a commercial

development of 9,727 square feet. The buildable lands methodology also assumes that in the CA zone, there is one employee per 400 square feet, thus this property could employ twenty-four (24) people if developed commercially.

With a rezone and extension of the overlay the parcels are proposed to be redeveloped as a mixed-use project. The proposed housing would include approximately 99 residential units, yielding a density of approximately 61.88 dwelling units/acre. The retail/commercial portion of the proposed project would be approximately 7,500 square feet. Using buildable lands methodology in the CA zone, the one employee per 400 square-foot standard would yield a development that would employ 18 people if developed as proposed.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMPLIANCE: The proposed rezone of the northern portion of the 100-block of Hardie Avenue, the extension of the Rainier Business District Overlay, and the text amendments of the Rainier Business District Overlay must meet at least one criteria in RMC 4-9-020G. This criteria requires that it be found that:

- 1) The request supports the vision embodied in the Comprehensive Plan,
or
- 2) The request supports the adopted business plan goals established by
the City Council, or
- 3) The request eliminates conflicts with existing elements or policies, or
- 4) The request amends the Comprehensive Plan to accommodate new
policy directives of the City Council.

All three portions of this request meet the first criterion, that the change supports the vision embodied in the Comprehensive Plan. The adopted Comprehensive Plan vision calls for the promotion of new development and neighborhoods that contribute to a strong sense of community and neighborhood identity, as well as, being developed at densities sufficient to support public transportation and make efficient use of urban services and infrastructure. This request also furthers the intentions of the Comprehensive Plan in that it provides vibrancy with higher intensity land use in an area that has been targeted for such growth. It would provide retail and/or employment opportunities and housing to area residents fostering Renton's continued vibrancy.

ZONING CONCURRENCY: This request complies with the decision criteria for rezones in RMC 4-9-180. This criteria requires that it be found that:

- 1) The proposed amendment meets the review criteria in RMC 4-9-020G;
and

- 2) The property is potentially classified for the proposed zone being requested pursuant to the policies set forth in the Comprehensive Plan; and
- 3) At least one of the following circumstances applies:
 - a) The subject reclassification was not specifically considered at the time of the last area land use analysis and area zoning; or
 - b) Since the most recent land use analysis or the area zoning of the subject property, authorized public improvements, permitted private development or other circumstances affecting the subject property have undergone significant and material change.

This request meets all of the required zoning change criteria above. Criteria number three is met through subpart b. The Rainier Avenue corridor has experienced significant and material change due to authorized public improvements in Downtown. The area has also experienced significant and material change due to permitted private development in Downtown. This request is compliant with the Comprehensive Plan and the proposed zoning is consistent with the adopted policies for the CA land use designation.

CONCLUSION: Hardie Avenue is a roadway that is currently used as a pass through street during peak traffic hours and also has experienced increased traffic volumes during off peak times in the last few years; this section of Hardie accommodates approximately 10,500 vehicles per day. These changes and the existing three-story retirement home across Hardie Avenue indicate higher intensity land uses than residential medium density and justify a change to a commercial designation. In conjunction with the Comprehensive Plan designation change, the zoning should be changed from R-10 to CA on Hardie Avenue from 188 Hardie, north to SW Victoria Street.

One of the ways the City can help to facilitate the stated goals of increasing density and promoting uses that are of a higher intensity land use than the current existing uses on Rainier Avenue is to increase the maximum residential density allowed in the Rainier Business District Overlay. Thus, the Rainier Business District Overlay should be amended to allow 60 dwelling units per acre within mixed-use development as the other three business districts in the City currently allow. Finally, the Overlay should be extended as shown on Attachment A. Roughly, north to Airport Way bound by Lake Avenue S. on the east and on the west by Hardie Avenue until it reaches SW Victoria Street to include only the commercially zoned properties in that block and including the block bound by Hayes Place SW on the west and Renton Avenue on the north.